



## Care & Support Awareness Month NEWSLETTER



### Focus on: Marston Gardens – the extra care scheme with a difference

Among the millions of people enjoying the World Cup Final on Sunday were residents of Marston Gardens, Cosmopolitan's 'extra care' supported housing scheme in Huyton.

Staff from Cosmopolitan and the scheme's care providers Community Integrated Care (CIC) teamed up with tenants to organise a barbecue party for the showdown Holland v. Spain match which was shown on the giant TV in the lounge.

Like anywhere else in Liverpool, football is a big part of life at Marston Gardens, where the resident 'reds' and 'blues' are equally passionate about their teams.



However it's the way that tenants with very different support needs have gelled so well in such a short space of time that is the most surprising aspect of Marston Gardens.

Unlike most extra care schemes which specialise in one particular client group, such as older people for

example, Marston Gardens is home to a truly diverse community of individuals, ranging from 19 to 84, and with support needs including physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health problems and alcohol addiction.



It could have been a recipe for disaster, but it has proved anything but, with everyone seemingly benefitting from the diversity of needs under the same roof.

Key to its success has been the dedication and skill of scheme manager Michelle Duval and her team, who not only provide flexible care and support to tenants but help to nurture Marston Garden's unique and lively family atmosphere.

"We had a few teething problems at first, as you'd expect" says Michelle, "but things are really settled now. It's just like any other community; sometimes neighbours don't get on or they fall out over someone playing their music too loud for example, but that's normal life and we help people to deal with that.

"People really look out for each other though. You'll see older people getting out of a taxi outside with a load of heavy shopping and the younger ones are out there in a flash to help them. Just recently we've had a lot of birthdays and people have gone out and got cards and presents for each other and bought food for the party. It's really nice to see."

Michelle is full of praise for the outside agencies that come in to Marston Gardens, in particular Knowsley's Assertive Outreach Team. "They've been absolutely brilliant" she says. "They've helped set up a music group with a local musician who was on the X Factor so every Friday there's a band practice in the lounge.

"They've also set up a mental health support group that meets every week and includes people from the local area with mental health issues. If people have had a bad day or a bad week they can come and talk about it and get help to deal with whatever's troubling them.

"We've got a gentle exercise class that meets every week and we're about to have the community cooks coming in to teach tenants how to cook healthily on a budget. There's always something going on here."

Operated in partnership with Knowsley Council and Knowsley Health & Wellbeing, the purpose built £2.8m scheme provides 23 self contained apartments along with a communal lounge and kitchen, laundry room, assisted bathroom, IT suite, treatment and therapy rooms, sun lounge and gardens.

Local comedy legend Ken Dodd summed it up perfectly when he officially opened Marston Gardens in February 2010: "What a wonderful lovely place this is" he declared, "and a marvellous example of what love and goodwill can do in the community."



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More news from CASA month next Friday.

Best wishes,

Geoff Redhead  
Group Chief Executive



# Celebrate CASA month July 2010

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